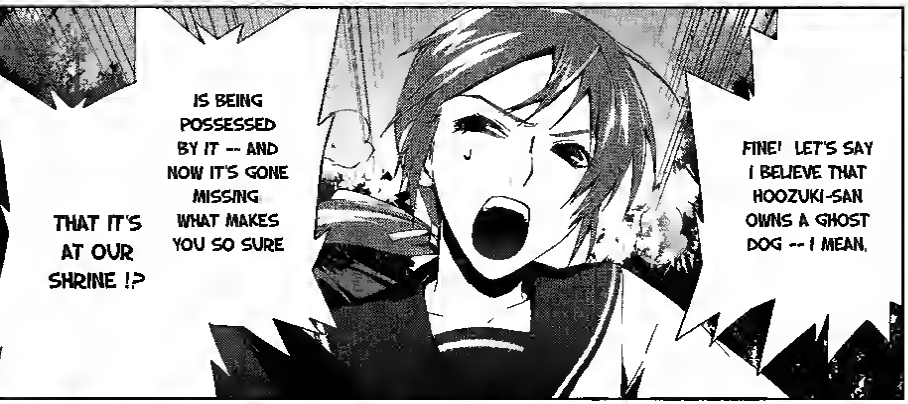
The Third: "The Dog's Name" (4)


FINE! LET'S SAY I BELIEVE THAT HOOZUKI-SAN OWNS A GHOST DOG -- I MEAN,
IS BEING POSSESSED BY IT -- AND NOW IT'S GONE MISSING WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE
THAT IT'S AT OUR SHRINE !?

I CAN'T REALLY EXPLAIN BUT IT HIT ME WHEN I SAW THAT SHRINE SWORD YESTERDAY!
I'M CONVINCED THAT'S WHAT MADE ESSIE HOWL AND GROW HOSTILE!

Kanji: Dog (top) Monkey (bottom)

戌
申
IF IT IS, YOU KNOW HOW DOGS AND MONKEYS TRADITIONALLY DON'T GET ALONG -- THEY'D BE AT EACH OTHER FOR NO REASON...
WELL, UH, IS THE KANJI FOR SHIROSARU "WHITE MONKEY"?
SO THAT SWORD AT HINOSAKA SHRINE IS CALLED SHIROSARU TOUSHIROU, RIGHT?
WHAT ABOUT IT!?

...IS WHAT I THOUGHT, BUT...
.....
THAT'S IT!
I KNOW THERE'S A LOT GOING ON, AND I CAN'T EXPLAIN THINGS VERY WELL, BUT...
WHAT?
ER, HIME?
NO, LOOK, I'M SURE IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE...

I WANT YOU TO BELIEVE ME FOR NOW.

……
SFX: CLACK!
CAN I HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL?
SFX: Mumble!
SFX: Ring, ring!
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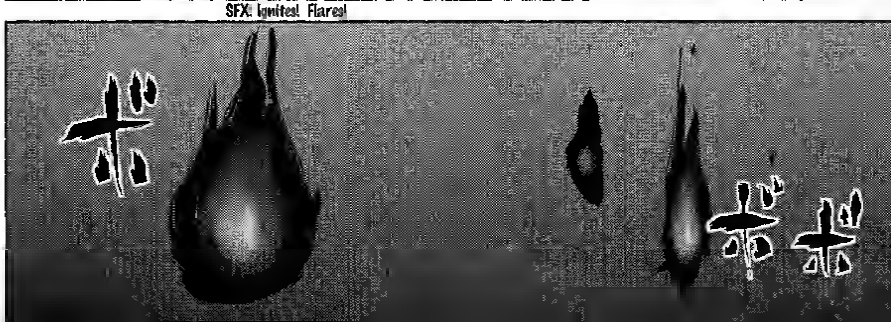
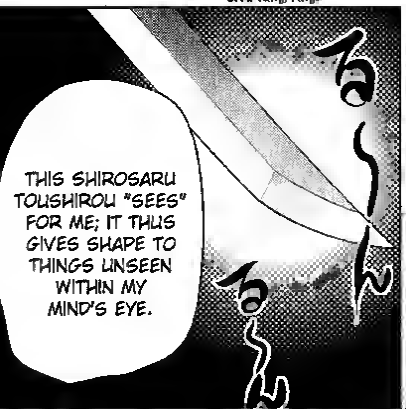
SFX: RING!

THERE YOU ARE...


SFX: Ignites! Flares!

SFX: King, ring!

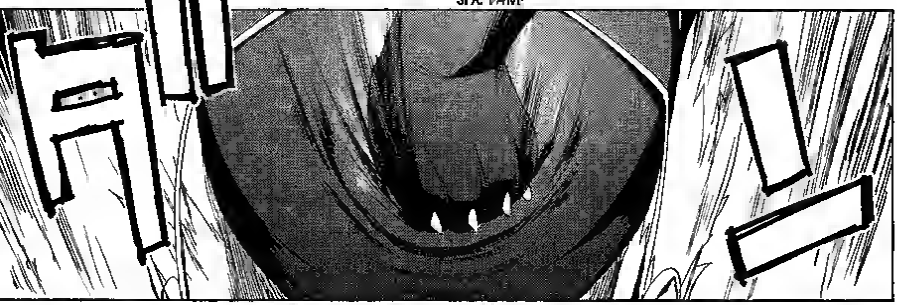


GRRRR!
WE WERE INTERRUPTED YESTERDAY...
BUT WE'VE PLENTY OF TIME NOW.
MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW IS OUT GETTING VACCINATIONS FOR HER DAUGHTER, AND WON'T RETURN UNTIL PAST NOON.
MY GRANDDAUGHTER HAS SCHOOL TILL SIX, AND CLUB ACTIVITIES AFTER.
AND THAT IDIOTIC SON OF MINE, WHO SOLD HIS SOUL TO FOREIGN CAPITAL, WILL UNDOUBTEDLY STAGGER IN PAST MIDNIGHT AGAIN!
SFX:

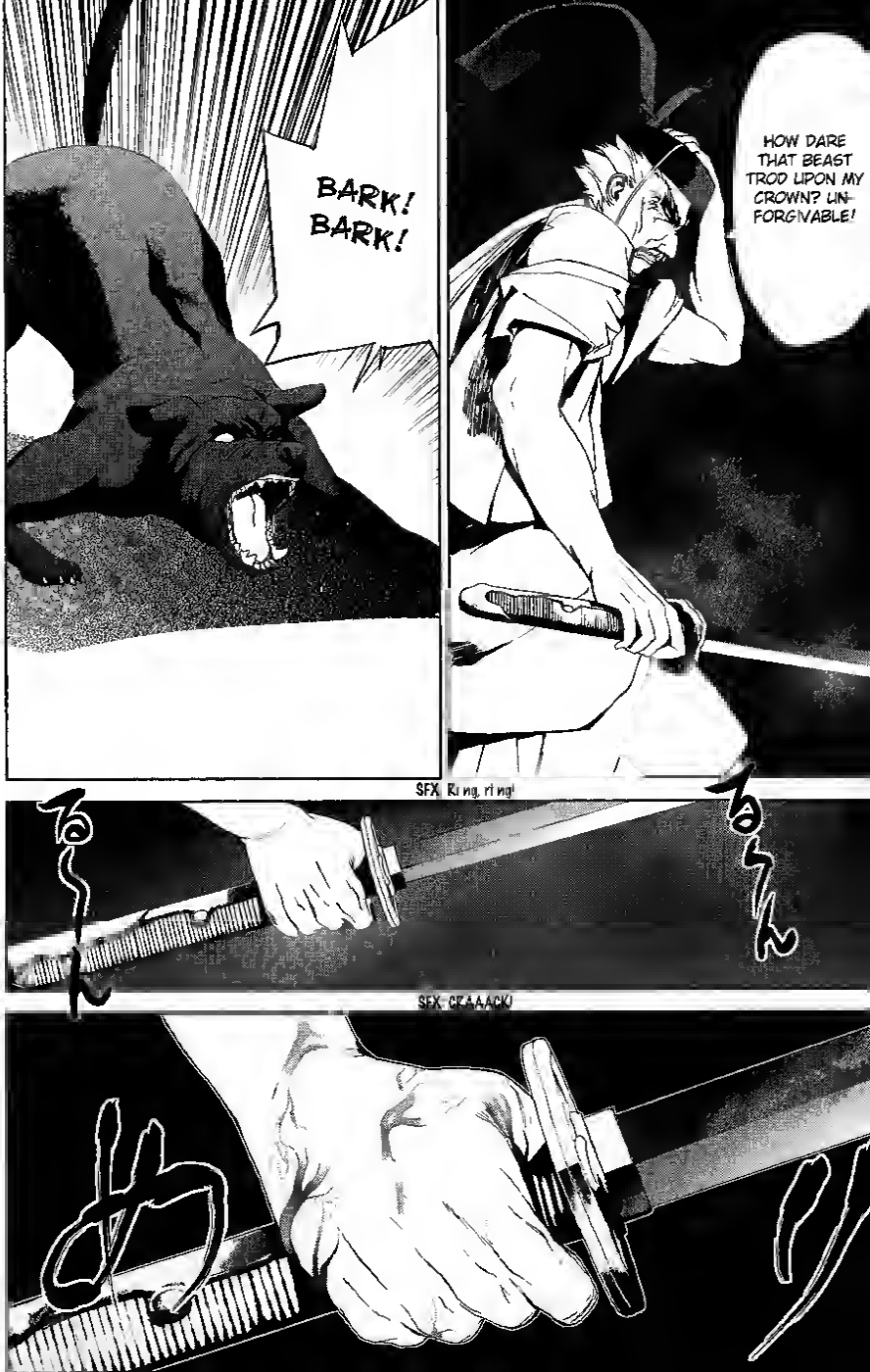
GRAOWL!
VILE SPIRIT THAT AIMLESSLY WANDERS HADES, PREPARE THYSELF!!

SFX. ROAWWWWW!
KEI-YA AAH!
SCRAM

SFX: BAM!



SFX: Thud!


BARK! BARK!
HOW DARE THAT BEAST TROD UPON MY CROWN? UNFORGIVABLE!
SFX: Ri ng, ri ng!
SFX: GRAAACK!

WAIT, HIME!
!
GRANDPA!
HOLD ON, YOUR GRANDFATHER SEEMS ODD...
WHY!?

THAT SWORD...
GRRR-RRR-
WHAT IS IT? DO YOU SEE SOMETHING?

HOOZUKI.
SOME-
THING'S
DEFINITELY
WRONG,

SFX: VWOOM, VWOOM!

AH, SHINO.. WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT HAPPENED TO SCHOOL?
GRANDPA! JUST WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED HERE!?
GRANDPA LET GO OF THAT SWORD NOW!
NOTHING - SOME VERMIN ENTERED OUR GROUNDS, AND I'M ABOUT TO STAMP IT OUT.

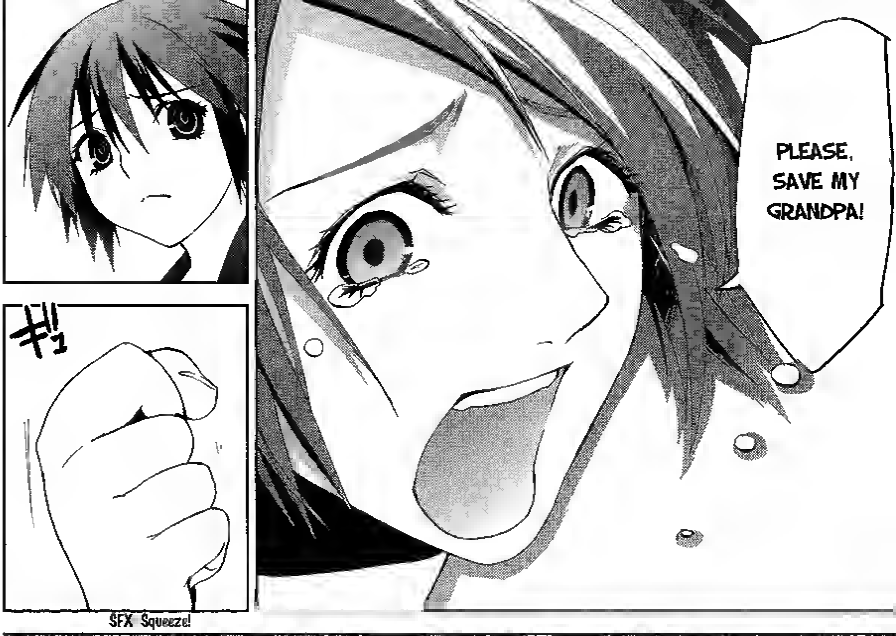
SHINO. HINDER ME FURTHER AND I'LL SLAY YOU FIRST.

STAY SILENT.

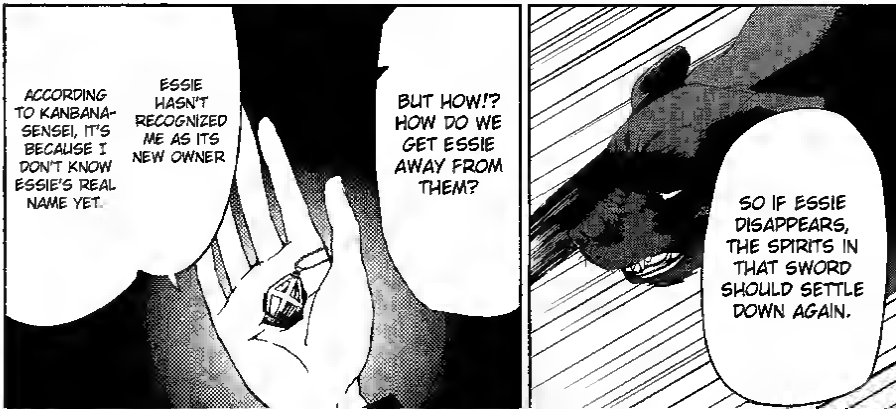
HOOZUKI, QUICK!
GRRRRR!
ESSIE!
URRRRR!
ESSIE!
Essie, come here!
IS IT REALLY OKAY TO LEAVE HIMESHINO'S GRAMPS ALONE LIKE THAT!?
I DON'T KNOW!
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING BAD LURKING IN THAT SWORD, LOTS OF THEM...

SO HE GOT CURSED OR SOMETHING!?
YES.
AND HIS HP GOES DOWN WITH EACH MOVE?
YUP.
HP MY ASS, MY GRANDPA'S ALREADY CAUGHT!
CALM DOWN, IT'S JUST A METAPHOR!
SFX: WHOOSH!

SFX: SWAY!
MAIKA!


PLEASE, SAVE MY GRANDPA!
#1
SFX Squeeze!

ATTRACT NEW SPIRITS IN TURN.
MY GUESS IS THAT THE RESENTMENT FROM THE SPIRITS TRAPPED INSIDE
THAT SWORD PROBABLY GOT STRONGER FROM ABSORBING A LOT OF SPIRITS.


ACCORDING TO KANBANA-SENSEI, IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW ESSIE'S REAL NAME YET.
ESSIE HASN'T RECOGNIZED ME AS ITS NEW OWNER
BUT HOW!? HOW DO WE GET ESSIE AWAY FROM THEM?
SO IF ESSIE DISAPPEARS, THE SPIRITS IN THAT SWORD SHOULD SETTLE DOWN AGAIN.

WHAT? THE DOG'S "REAL NAME"? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
"ESSIE" IS A NICKNAME. ITS REAL NAME MUST'VE BEEN LONGER AND HARDER TO CALL OUT.
ESSIE WAS TRAINED WITH ENGLISH, SO THE REAL NAME WAS PROBABLY ENGLISH TOO.
I NEED YOU TWO TO BRAIN-STORM SOME!
ガ!!
ガ!!
ガ!!

SFX: CLING! CLANG! CRACK!

SFX: Nod, nod!
THINK MORE SERIOUSLY!
Estrada!
ESTRA-DA!
WHO!?
HE'S THAT PORTU-GUESE WRITER ...
Eça de Queirós!
ECA DE QUEIROS!
ES, ES, ES...
Escargo!
ESCARGO!

WHICH MEANS?
MAYBE "ESSIE" IS AN ABBREVIATION OF "S" AND "C" FROM THE ALPHABET!
LET'S SEE - ES, ES...
COME AGAIN?
..."S"? THAT'S IT, "S"!
"S-SWEET"!
SWEET♪
SFX: Twitch!
とり

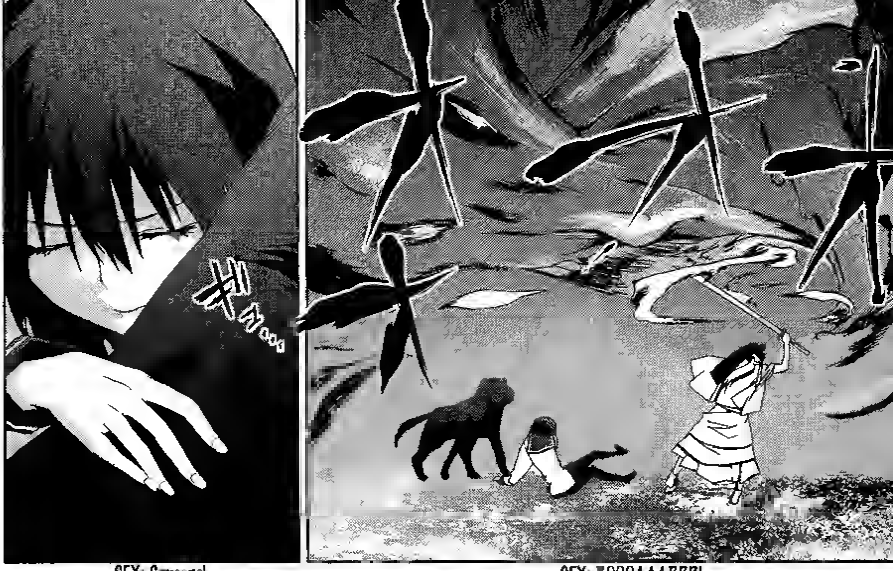
HER EAR! ESSIE'S EAR RESPONDED!
YOU GOT THE "S" RIGHT, TOONO-KUN! NOW, "C"!
"C"? C... C...
CORN! SWEET CORN!!
Sweet Corn!
NOPE! ANYTHING ELSE!?
DAMMIT HIMESHINO, YOU'VE LIVED IN CANADA! CAN'T YOU THINK OF WORDS BEGINNING WITH C THAT FOLLOWS "SWEET"!?
COME ON, THERE ARE WAY TOO MANY OF THOSE!
IT'S A DOG'S NAME! IT CAN'T BE JUST ANYTHING!
IMAGINE YOURSELF AS THE OWNER!
CANDY? "SWEET CANDY"!
Sweet Candy!

GROWLLL!

HOOZUKI, WE CAN'T SEE ESSIE AT ALL.
WHAT KIND OF A DOG IS SHE?
I DON'T KNOW THE BREED! SHE'S BIG AND DARK BROWN!
DARK BROWN? ... I GOT IT!

IT'S CHOCLATE! SO THE NAME IS "SWEET --"
SFX: FWOOM!
ESSIE!

Essie, stop!
Essie!
SFX: Dash!
SFX: Bam!
ARGHH!?


SFX: Squeeze!
SFX: ROOOAAARRR!

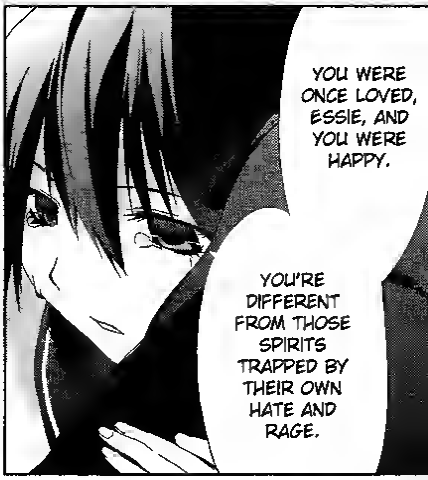
ESSIE!
ESSIE PLEASE! LISTEN TO ME, ESSIE!

GRRR-RRRR!

PLEASE, ESSIE -- THINK BACK TO WHEN YOU WERE ALIVE.
IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ALL BAD...
YOU LITTLE MINX!
ALL YOU VERMIN SHALL BECOME RUST ON THIS BLADE!
SFX: CLANG!

STOP IT, GRANDPA!
HOO-ZUKI, GET AWAY!

JUST FOR A WHILE, I WANT YOU TO LISTEN TO ME AND HIDE INSIDE HERE.

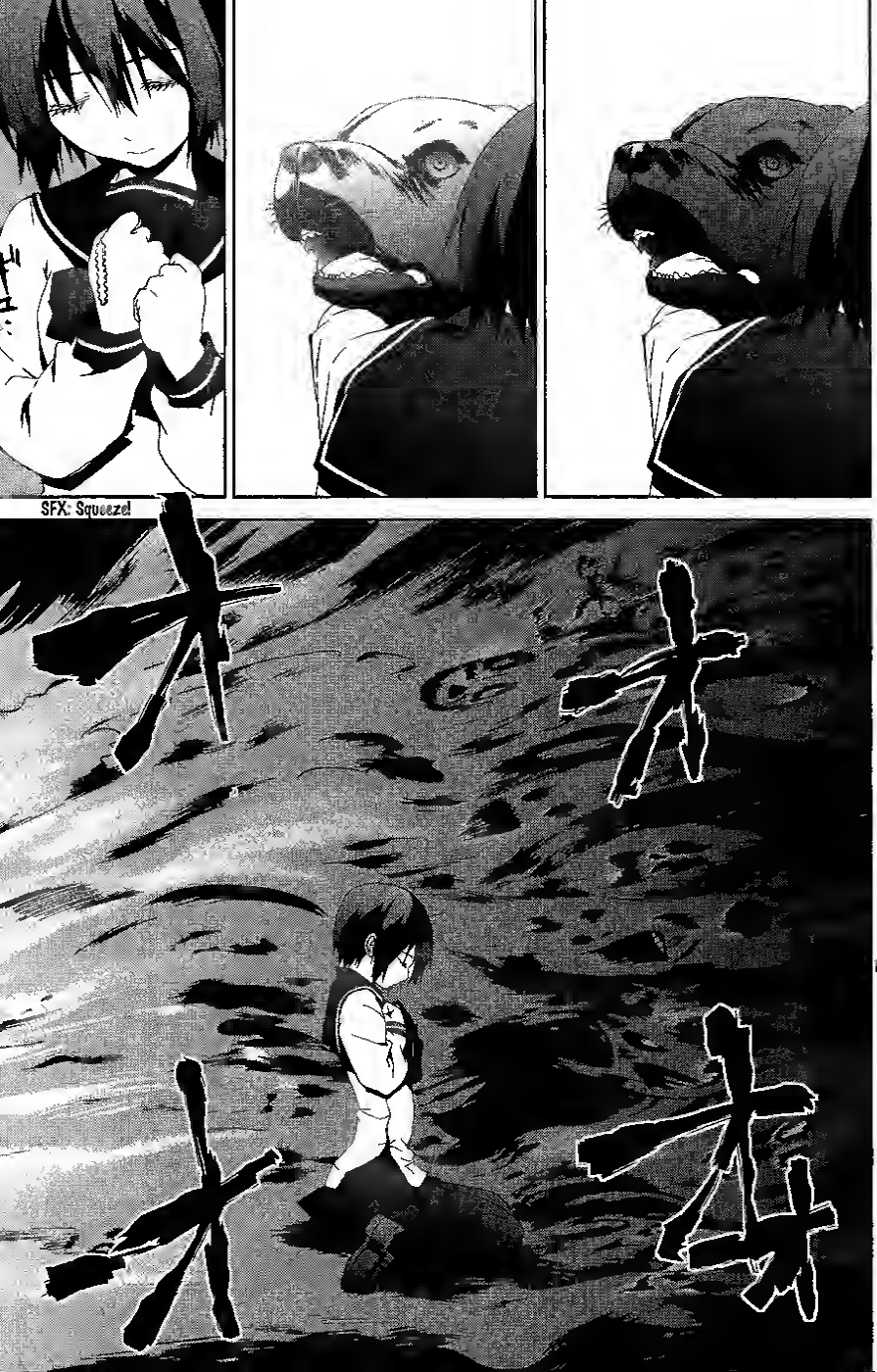

YOU WERE ONCE LOVED, ESSIE, AND YOU WERE HAPPY.
YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE SPIRITS TRAPPED BY THEIR OWN HATE AND RAGE.

SWEET ...

Snuf-fle.

snuf-fle!

Sweet Caramel.
Essie wasn't always dork brown... so she's...


SFX: Squeeze!
SFX: KOOOOOAAAEEE!

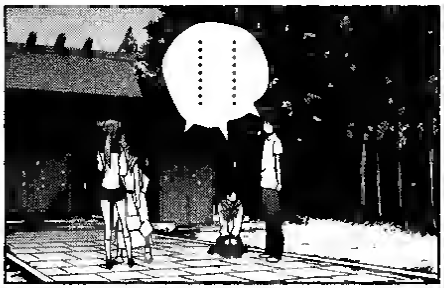
SFX: ROOOOOAAAAKKR!

SFX: Sway!
WHEW!
GRANDPA!
SFX: Thunk!
NO, I'M FINE...
UGH...
ARE YOU OKAY, MAIKA!? DID YOU GET HURT!?

I'M SORRY, SHINO. I'M SO SORRY...
IT CAN'T BE HELPED GRANDPA, YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT YOU WERE DOING.
SFX: Tears
Sob, sob, sob!

WELL DONE.
THANKS, TOONO-KUN.
WHAT'S WRONG? DID YOU GET HURT?
N-NO, I'M FINE...

TOONO-KUN, YOU CAN GO AHEAD BACK TO SCHOOL.
HUH? WHY?
.....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OH, UH... YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
THEY MIGHT BE WORRIED, RIGHT? GO BACK AND MAKE SOME EXCUSE FOR ALL OF US.
YEAH, TOONO, YOU BETTER HEAD BACK BEFORE US. WE RAN OUT WITHOUT PERMISSION AND EVERYTHING.

OKAY, I'LL BE GOING BACK AHEAD OF YOU GUYS.
TOONO -KUN!
HM?

MAIKAAA!!
SEE YOU LATER...
SURE THING,
CATCH YOU LATER!

WELL, WE WORKED UP A "SWEAT" FROM ALL THAT RUN-NING...
LET'S TAKE A BATH AGAIN!
SFX: Ri ng!
ろーん...
YES!

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Translator	-	Royal
Proofreader	-	PervySageChuck
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Typesetter	-	pochacco7
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